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Holiday Safety Tips

Chief Tom Carr and the Men and Women of the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service want to help make your holidays more joyful and safe. By taking the simple safety precautions listed below, you can help ensure that you and your loved ones will have a ***Fire Safe Home For The Holidays!***

Lights and Candles

- Decorate your tree using only UL (Underwriters' Lab Inc.) approved lights and cords. Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets. Do not overload extension cords. Use no more than three strings of lights on one extension cord, and never run an electrical cord under a carpet. Be sure to secure electrical cords so that children cannot pull them and topple the tree.
- Turn off the tree lights when you go to bed, depart from home or leave the tree in an unattended room.
- Keep burning candles out of children's and pet's reach; keep matches and lighters out of sight and locked away. Make sure they are in stable holders. Do not leave candles unattended – especially around children or pets.
- Do not place candles near draperies or anything that might easily catch fire. Make sure you put out candles when you go to bed or leave the home.
- **Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree!** Do not go near a holiday tree with an open flame — candles, lighters or matches.

Cooking

- Never leave cooking food unattended – it is the number one cause of house fires.
- Make sure you wear close-fitting clothing when cooking.
- Put pans on back burners and turn all pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Never leave a child unattended in the kitchen. Close supervision is essential, whether children are helping an adult cook or simply watching.

Trees

- When selecting a tree for the Holiday, needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard. A safer option is to buy a fire-resistant artificial tree.
- Use a wide-based stand to make sure the tree is secure and will not fall over. Keep your tree in a container full of water, and check it daily.
- Keep the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators and heating vents. Decorate your tree with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that are breakable, have small detachable parts, metal hooks or look like food or candy on the lower branches where small children can reach them. Make sure tree lights are hung out of reach of young children. Also, cut back the lower branches to avoid eye injuries to small children.
- Never burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood or wrapping paper in your fireplace. Dispose of your tree promptly after the holidays.

Other Related Tips

- Have your furnace and chimney professionally inspected and cleaned. Chimney tar build-up can ignite your chimney, roof and the whole house.
- Space heaters need space. Keep materials that burn easily at least three feet away from each heater.
- Working smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Test alarms once a month and replace the batteries at least twice a year. Home fires and home fire-related deaths are more likely to occur during the cold-weather months.
- Plan and practice at least two fire escape routes from each room of your home and identify an outside meeting place.

“Together We Can Save Lives And Prevent Injuries”